CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An isolated DNA encoding a hek-L protein capable of binding hek, wherein said DNA comprises a nucleotide sequence that is at least 80% identical to a sequence selected from the group consisting of nucleotides 83-796, 83-745, 140-796, and 140-745 of SEQ ID NO:1.

2. An isolated DNA according to claim 1, wherein said DNA comprises a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of nucleotides 83-796, 83-745, 140-796, and 140-745 of SEQ ID NO:1.

3. An isolated DNA encoding a hek-L protein capable of binding hek, wherein said DNA comprises a nucleotide sequence that is at least 80% identical to a sequence selected from the group consisting of nucleotides 28-630, 28-573, 94-630, and 94-573 of SEQ ID NO:3.

4. An isolated DNA according to claim 3, wherein said DNA comprises a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of nucleotides 28-630, 28-573, 94-630 and 94-573 of SEQ ID NO:3.

5. An isolated DNA encoding a human hek-L protein capable of binding hek, wherein said hek-L comprises an amino acid sequence that is at least 80% identical to a sequence selected from the group consisting of amino acids 1-202 and 1-219 of SEQ ID NO:2 and amino acids 1-160 and 1-179 of SEQ ID NO:4.

6. An isolated DNA according to claim 5, wherein said hek-L comprises an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of amino acids 1-202 and 1-219 of SEQ ID NO:2 and amino acids 1-160 and 1-179 of SEQ ID NO:4.

7. An isolated DNA encoding a fusion protein comprising a hek-L and an Fc polypeptide, wherein said hek-L comprises an amino acid sequence that is at least 80% identical to a sequence selected from the group consisting of amino acids 1-202 of SEQ ID NO:2 and amino acids 1-160 of SEQ ID NO:4.

8. An expression vector comprising a DNA according to claim 1.

9. An expression vector comprising a DNA according to claim 3.

10. An expression vector comprising a DNA according to claim 5.

11. An expression vector comprising a DNA according to claim 7.

12. A process for preparing a hek-L polypeptide, comprising culturing a host cell transformed with a vector according to claim 8 under conditions promoting expression of hek-L, and recovering the hek-L polypeptide from the culture.

13. A process for preparing a hek-L polypeptide, comprising culturing a host cell transformed with a vector according to claim 9 under conditions promoting expression of hek-L and recovering the hek-L polypeptide from the culture.

14. A process for preparing a hek-L polypeptide, comprising culturing a host cell transformed with a vector according to claim 10 under conditions promoting expression of hek-L, and recovering the hek-L polypeptide from the culture.

15. A process for preparing a hek-L polypeptide, comprising culturing a host cell transformed with a vector according to claim 11 under conditions promoting expression of hek-L, and recovering the hek-L polypeptide from the culture.

16. A purified mature human hek-L protein capable of binding hek, wherein said hek-L protein is characterized by the N-terminal amino acid sequence Leu-Leu-Ala-Gln-Gly-Pro-Gly-Gly-Ala-Leu-Gly-Asn.

17. A purified hek-L according to claim 16, wherein said hek-L comprises an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of amino acids 1-202 and 1-219 of SEQ ID NO:2.

18. A purified mature human hek-L protein capable of binding hek, wherein said hek-L protein is characterized by the N-terminal amino acid sequence Gly-Ser-Ser-Leu-Arg-His-Val-Val-Tyr-Trp-Asn-Ser.

19. A purified hek-L according to claim 18 wherein said hek-L comprises an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of amino acids 1-160 and 1-179 of SEQ ID NO:4.

20. A purified hek-L protein encoded by a DNA according to claim 5.

21. A purified hek-L polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of:

a) amino acids 1 through x of SEQ ID NO:2, wherein x is an amino acid in positions 193 to 219 of SEQ ID NO:2; and

b) amino acids 1 through y of SEQ ID NO:4, wherein y is an amino acid in positions 147 to 179 of SEQ ID NO:4.

22. A hek-L protein encoded by the hek-L cDNA insert of the recombinant vector contained in transformed cells selected from the group consisting of transformed cells deposited as ATCC 69384 and transformed cells deposited as ATCC 69395.

23. A fusion protein encoded by a DNA according to claim 7.

24. An antibody that is immunoreactive with a hek-L protein according to claim 20 or with an immunogenic fragment of said hek-L.

25. An antibody according to claim 24, wherein said antibody is a monoclonal antibody.

26. An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising a sequence of at least about 14 nucleotides of a DNA sequence according to claim 2 or its DNA or RNA complement.

27. An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising a sequence of at least about 14 nucleotides of a DNA sequence according to claim 4 or its DNA or RNA complement.